

**Risk Assessment  
Guidance for Superfund  
Volume I  
Human Health Evaluation Manual  
(Part A)**

Interim Final

Office of Emergency and Remedial Response  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Washington, D.C. 20450

## NOTICE

The policies and procedures set forth here are intended solely as guidance to EPA and other government employees and contractors. This guidance does not constitute rulemaking by the Agency, and cannot be relied on to create a substantive or procedural right enforceable by any party in litigation with the United States. EPA may take action that is at variance with the policies and procedures in this manual and may change them at any time without public notice.

This interim final guidance is based on policies in the proposed revisions to the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP), which were published on December 21, 1988 (53 *Federal Register* 51394). The final NCP may adopt policies different than those in this manual and should, when promulgated, be considered the authoritative source. A final version of this manual will be published after the revised NCP is promulgated.

Following the date of its publication, this manual is intended to be used as guidance for all human health risk assessments conducted as part of Superfund remedial investigations and feasibility studies. Issuance of this manual does not invalidate human health risk assessments completed before (or in progress at) the publication date and based on previously released Agency guidance.

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## ABOUT THE REVISION . . .

**WHAT IT IS** EPA's *Human Health Evaluation Manual* is a revision of the *Superfund Public Health Evaluation Manual* (SPHEM; October 1986); it is Volume I of the two-volume set called *Risk Assessment Guidance for Superfund*. This manual has three main parts: the baseline risk assessment (Part A); refinement of preliminary remediation goals (Part B); and evaluation of remedial alternatives (Part C). (Only Part A is included in the first distribution; see below.)

**WHO IT'S FOR** Risk assessors, risk assessment reviewers, remedial project managers (RPMs), and risk managers involved in Superfund site cleanup activities will benefit from this revision.

**WHAT'S NEW** This revision builds upon the process established in SPHEM and provides more detailed guidance on many of the procedures used to assess health risk. New information and techniques are presented that reflect the extensive Superfund program experience conducting health risk assessments at Superfund sites. Policies established and refined over the years -- especially those resulting from the proposed National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) -- have been updated and clarified. Additionally, the links between the human health evaluation, the environmental evaluation, and the remedial investigation/feasibility study (RI/FS) have been strengthened.

In Part A you will find:

**For the risk assessor** -- Updated procedures and policies, specific equations and variable values for estimating exposure, and a hierarchy of toxicity data sources.

**For the risk assessment reviewer** -- A baseline risk assessment outline for consistent presentation of risk information and format, and a reviewer's checklist to ensure appropriate quality and content of the risk assessment.

**For the RPM** -- A comprehensive overview of the risk assessment process in the RI/FS, a checklist for RPM involvement throughout the process, and a complete index for quick reference.

**For the risk manager** -- An expanded chapter on risk characterization (Chapter 8) to help summarize and present risk information for the decision-maker, and more detailed descriptions of uncertainties in the assessment.

**DISTRIBUTION PLAN** This manual is being distributed as an interim final document while the proposed NCP is being finalized. After the final NCP is published, the manual will be updated and finalized. Parts B and C -- which were not distributed as interim final because they are highly dependent on possible revisions to the NCP -- will be added. Periodically, updates of portions of the manual will be distributed.

**WHERE  
TO SEND  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1-1
1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE HUMAN HEALTH EVALUATION PROCESS IN THE RI/FS .....	1-3
1.1.1 Project Scoping .....	1-4
1.1.2 Site Characterization (RI) .....	1-4
1.1.3 Feasibility Study .....	1-8
1.2 OVERALL ORGANIZATION OF THE MANUAL .....	1-10
<b>CHAPTER 2 STATUTES, REGULATIONS, GUIDANCE, AND STUDIES RELEVANT         TO THE HUMAN HEALTH EVALUATION</b> .....	2-1
2.1 STATUTES, REGULATIONS, AND GUIDANCE GOVERNING HUMAN HEALTH EVALUATION .....	2-1
2.1.1 CERCLA and SARA .....	2-1
2.1.2 National Contingency Plan (NCP) .....	2-4
2.1.3 Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study Guidance .....	2-5
2.1.4 ARARs Guidance .....	2-7
2.1.5 Superfund Exposure Assessment Manual .....	2-8
2.2 RELATED SUPERFUND STUDIES .....	2-8
2.2.1 Endangerment Assessments .....	2-8
2.2.2 ATSDR Health Assessments .....	2-9
2.2.3 ATSDR Health Studies .....	2-10
<b>CHAPTER 3 GETTING STARTED: PLANNING FOR THE HUMAN HEALTH         EVALUATION IN THE RI/FS</b> .....	3-1
3.1 Goal of the RI/FS .....	3-1
3.2 Goal of the RI/FS Human Health Evaluation .....	3-1
3.3 Operable Units .....	3-2
3.4 RI/FS Scoping .....	3-2
3.5 Level of Effort/Level of Detail of the Human Health Evaluation .....	3-3
<b>PART A -- BASELINE RISK ASSESSMENT</b>	
<b>CHAPTER 4 DATA COLLECTION</b> .....	4-1
4.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION USEFUL FOR DATA COLLECTION .....	4-1
4.1.1 Types of Data .....	4-1

4.1.2	Data Needs and the RI/FS .....	4-2
4.1.3	Early Identification of Data Needs .....	4-3
4.1.4	Use of the Data Quality Objectives (DQO) Guidance .....	4-4
4.1.5	Other Data Concerns .....	4-4
4.2	REVIEW OF AVAILABLE SITE INFORMATION .....	4-4
4.3	ADDRESSING MODELING PARAMETER NEEDS .....	4-5
4.4	DEFINING BACKGROUND SAMPLING NEEDS .....	4-5
4.4.1	Types of Background .....	4-5
4.4.2	Background Sampling Locations .....	4-8
4.4.3	Background Sample Size .....	4-8
4.4.4	Comparing Background Samples to Site-Related Contamination .....	4-9
4.5	PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL HUMAN EXPOSURE .....	4-10
4.5.1	General Information .....	4-10
4.5.2	Soil .....	4-11
4.5.3	Ground Water .....	4-12
4.5.4	Surface Water and Sediment .....	4-13
4.5.5	Air .....	4-14
4.5.6	Biota .....	4-15
4.6	DEVELOPING AN OVERALL STRATEGY FOR SAMPLE COLLECTION .....	4-16
4.6.1	Determine Sample Size .....	4-17
4.6.2	Establish Sampling Locations .....	4-18
4.6.3	Determine Types of Samples .....	4-19
4.6.4	Consider Temporal and Meteorological Factors .....	4-19
4.6.5	Use Field Screening Analyses .....	4-20
4.6.6	Consider Time and Cost of Sampling .....	4-21
4.7	QA/QC MEASURES .....	4-21
4.7.1	Sampling Protocol .....	4-21
4.7.2	Sampling Devices .....	4-21
4.7.3	QC Samples .....	4-22
4.7.4	Collection Procedures .....	4-22
4.7.5	Sample Preservation .....	4-22
4.8	SPECIAL ANALYTICAL SERVICES .....	4-22
4.9	TAKING AN ACTIVE ROLE DURING WORKPLAN DEVELOPMENT AND DATA COLLECTION .....	4-22
4.9.1	Present Risk Assessment Sampling Needs at Scoping Meeting .....	4-22
4.9.2	Contribute to Workplan and Review Sampling and Analysis Plan .....	4-23
4.9.3	Conduct Interim Reviews of Field Investigation Outputs .....	4-24

---

---

<b>CHAPTER 5 DATA EVALUATION</b>	<b>5-1</b>
5.1 COMBINING DATA AVAILABLE FROM SITE INVESTIGATIONS	5-2
5.2 EVALUATION OF ANALYTICAL METHODS	5-5
5.3 EVALUATION OF QUANTITATION LIMITS	5-7
5.3.1 Sample Quantitation Limits (SQLs) That Are Greater Than Reference Concentrations	5-7
5.3.2 Unusually High SQLs	5-10
5.3.3 When Only Some Samples in a Medium Test Positive for a Chemical	5-10
5.3.4 When SQLs Are Not Available	5-11
5.3.5 When Chemicals Are Not Detected in Any Samples in a Medium	5-11
5.4 EVALUATION OF QUALIFIED AND CODED DATA	5-11
5.4.1 Types of Qualifiers	5-11
5.4.2 Using the Appropriate Qualifiers	5-16
5.5 COMPARISON OF CONCENTRATIONS DETECTED IN BLANKS WITH CONCENTRATIONS DETECTED IN SAMPLES	5-16
5.6 EVALUATION OF TENTATIVELY IDENTIFIED COMPOUNDS	5-17
5.6.1 When Few TICs Are Present	5-18
5.6.2 When Many TICs Are Present	5-18
5.7 COMPARISON OF SAMPLES WITH BACKGROUND	5-18
5.7.1 Use Appropriate Background Data	5-19
5.7.2 Identify Statistical Methods	5-19
5.7.3 Compare Chemical Concentrations with Naturally Occurring Levels	5-19
5.7.4 Compare Chemical Concentrations with Anthropogenic Levels	5-19
5.8 DEVELOPMENT OF A SET OF CHEMICAL DATA AND INFORMATION FOR USE IN THE RISK ASSESSMENT	5-20
5.9 FURTHER REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF CHEMICALS (OPTIONAL)	5-20
5.9.1 Conduct Initial Activities	5-20
5.9.2 Group Chemicals by Class	5-22
5.9.3 Evaluate Frequency of Detection	5-22
5.9.4 Evaluate Essential Nutrients	5-23
5.9.5 Use a Concentration-Toxicity Screen	5-23
5.10 SUMMARY AND PRESENTATION OF DATA	5-24
5.10.1 Summarize Data Collection and Evaluation Results in Text	5-27
5.10.2 Summarize Data Collection and Evaluation Results in Tables and Graphics	5-27

---

<b>CHAPTER 6 EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>6-1</b>
6.1 BACKGROUND	6-1
6.1.1 Components of an Exposure Assessment	6-1
6.1.2 Reasonable Maximum Exposure	6-4
6.2 STEP 1: CHARACTERIZATION OF EXPOSURE SETTING	6-5
6.2.1 Characterize Physical Setting	6-5
6.2.2 Characterize Potentially Exposed Populations	6-6
6.3 STEP 2: IDENTIFICATION OF EXPOSURE PATHWAYS	6-8
6.3.1 Identify Sources and Receiving Media	6-8
6.3.2 Evaluate Fate and Transport in Release Media	6-11
6.3.3 Identify Exposure Points and Exposure Routes	6-11
6.3.4 Integrate Information on Sources, Releases, Fate and Transport, Exposure Points, and Exposure Routes Into Exposure Pathways	6-17
6.3.5 Summarize Information on All Complete Exposure Pathways	6-17
6.4 STEP 3: QUANTIFICATION OF EXPOSURE: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS	6-19
6.4.1 Quantifying the Reasonable Maximum Exposure	6-19
6.4.2 Timing Considerations	6-23
6.5 QUANTIFICATION OF EXPOSURE: DETERMINATION OF EXPOSURE CONCENTRATIONS	6-24
6.5.1 General Considerations for Estimating Exposure Concentrations	6-24
6.5.2 Estimate Exposure Concentrations in Ground Water	6-26
6.5.3 Estimate Exposure Concentrations in Soil	6-27
6.5.4 Estimate Exposure Concentrations in Air	6-28
6.5.5 Estimate Exposure Concentrations in Surface Water	6-29
6.5.6 Estimate Exposure Concentrations in Sediments	6-30
6.5.7 Estimate Chemical Concentrations in Food	6-31
6.5.8 Summarize Exposure Concentrations for Each Pathway	6-32
6.6 QUANTIFICATION OF EXPOSURE: ESTIMATION OF CHEMICAL INTAKE	6-32
6.6.1 Calculate Ground-water and Surface Water Intakes	6-34
6.6.2 Calculate Soil, Sediment, or Dust Intakes	6-39
6.6.3 Calculate Air Intakes	6-43
6.6.4 Calculate Food Intakes	6-43
6.7 COMBINING CHEMICAL INTAKES ACROSS PATHWAYS	6-47
6.8 EVALUATING UNCERTAINTY	6-47
6.9 SUMMARIZING AND PRESENTING THE EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT RESULTS	6-50

---



<b>CHAPTER 7 TOXICITY ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>7-1</b>
7.1 TYPES OF TOXICOLOGICAL INFORMATION CONSIDERED IN TOXICITY ASSESSMENT	7-3
7.1.1 Human Data	7-3
7.1.2 Animal Data	7-5
7.1.3 Supporting Data	7-5
7.2 TOXICITY ASSESSMENT FOR NONCARCINOGENIC EFFECTS	7-5
7.2.1 Concept of Threshold	7-6
7.2.2 Derivation of an Oral RfD ( $RfD_o$ )	7-6
7.2.3 Derivation of an Inhalation RfD ( $RfD_i$ )	7-8
7.2.4 Derivation of a Subchronic RfD ( $RfD_s$ )	7-8
7.2.5 Derivation of a Developmental Toxicant RfD ( $RfD_{dt}$ )	7-9
7.2.6 One-day and Ten-day Health Advisories	7-9
7.2.7 Verification of RfDs	7-10
7.3 TOXICITY ASSESSMENT FOR CARCINOGENIC EFFECTS	7-10
7.3.1 Concept of Nonthreshold Effects	7-10
7.3.2 Assigning a Weight of Evidence	7-11
7.3.3 Generating a Slope Factor	7-11
7.3.4 Verification of Slope Factors	7-13
7.4 IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE TOXICITY VALUES FOR SITE RISK ASSESSMENT	7-13
7.4.1 Gather Toxicity Information for Chemicals Being Evaluated	7-13
7.4.2 Determine Toxicity Values for Noncarcinogenic Effects (RfDs)	7-15
7.4.3 Determine Toxicity Values for Carcinogenic Effects (Slope Factors)	7-16
7.5 EVALUATING CHEMICALS FOR WHICH NO TOXICITY VALUES ARE AVAILABLE	7-16
7.5.1 Route-to-Route Extrapolation	7-16
7.5.2 Dermal Exposure	7-16
7.5.3 Generation of Toxicity Values	7-17
7.6 UNCERTAINTIES RELATED TO TOXICITY INFORMATION	7-17
7.7 SUMMARIZATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE TOXICITY INFORMATION	7-20
7.7.1 Toxicity Information for the Main Body of the Text	7-20
7.7.2 Toxicity Information for Inclusion in an Appendix	7-20

---

<b>CHAPTER 8 RISK CHARACTERIZATION</b>	<b>8-1</b>
8.1 REVIEW OF OUTPUTS FROM THE TOXICITY AND EXPOSURE ASSESSMENTS	8-1
8.1.1 Gather and Organize Information	8-4
8.1.2 Make Final Consistency and Validity Check	8-4
8.2 QUANTIFYING RISKS	8-6
8.2.1 Calculate Risks for Individual Substances	8-6
8.2.2 Aggregate Risks for Multiple Substances	8-11
8.3 COMBINING RISKS ACROSS EXPOSURE PATHWAYS	8-15
8.3.1 Identify Reasonable Exposure Pathway Combinations	8-15
8.3.2 Sum Cancer Risks	8-16
8.3.3 Sum Noncancer Hazard Indices	8-16
8.4 ASSESSMENT AND PRESENTATION OF UNCERTAINTY	8-17
8.4.1 Identify and Evaluate Important Site-Specific Uncertainty Factors	8-17
8.4.2 Identify/Evaluate Toxicity Assessment Uncertainty Factors	8-22
8.5 CONSIDERATION OF SITE-SPECIFIC HUMAN STUDIES	8-22
8.5.1 Compare with ATSDR Health Assessment	8-24
8.5.2 Compare with Other Available Site-Specific Epidemiological or Health Studies	8-24
8.6 SUMMARIZATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE BASELINE RISK CHARACTERIZATION RESULTS	8-25
8.6.1 Summarize Risk Information in Text	8-25
8.6.2 Summarize Risk Information in Tables	8-26
<b>CHAPTER 9 DOCUMENTATION, REVIEW, AND MANAGEMENT TOOLS FOR THE RISK ASSESSOR, REVIEWER, AND MANAGER</b>	<b>9-1</b>
9.1 DOCUMENTATION TOOLS	9-1
9.1.1 Basic Principles	9-1
9.1.2 Baseline Risk Assessment Report	9-2
9.1.3 Other Key Reports	9-3
9.2 REVIEW TOOLS	9-3
9.3 MANAGEMENT TOOLS	9-14

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<b>CHAPTER 10 RADIATION RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE</b> .....	10-1
10.1 RADIATION PROTECTION PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS .....	10-3
10.2 REGULATION OF RADIOACTIVELY CONTAMINATED SITES .....	10-8
10.3 DATA COLLECTION .....	10-10
10.3.1 Radiation Detection Methods .....	10-10
10.3.2 Reviewing Available Site Information .....	10-14
10.3.3 Addressing Modeling Parameter Needs .....	10-14
10.3.4 Defining Background Radiation Sampling Needs .....	10-14
10.3.5 Preliminary Identification of Potential Exposure .....	10-15
10.3.6 Developing a Strategy for Sample Collection .....	10-15
10.3.7 Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC) Measures .....	10-16
10.4 DATA EVALUATION .....	10-16
10.4.1 Combining Data from Available Site Investigations .....	10-17
10.4.2 Evaluating Analytical Methods .....	10-17
10.4.3 Evaluating Quantitation Limits .....	10-17
10.4.4 Evaluating Qualified and Coded Data .....	10-20
10.4.5 Comparing Concentrations Detected in Blanks with Concentrations Detected in Samples .....	10-20
10.4.6 Evaluating Tentatively Identified Radionuclides .....	10-21
10.4.7 Comparing Samples with Background .....	10-21
10.4.8 Developing a Set of Radionuclide Data and Information for Use in a Risk Assessment .....	10-21
10.4.9 Grouping Radionuclides by Class .....	10-21
10.4.10 Further Reduction in the Number of Radionuclides .....	10-21
10.4.11 Summarizing and Presenting Data .....	10-22
10.5 EXPOSURE AND DOSE ASSESSMENT .....	10-22
10.5.1 Characterizing the Exposure Setting .....	10-23
10.5.2 Identifying Exposure Pathways .....	10-23
10.5.3 Quantifying Exposure: General Considerations .....	10-24
10.5.4 Quantifying Exposure: Determining Exposure Point Concentrations .....	10-25
10.5.5 Quantifying Exposure: Estimating Intake and Dose Equivalent .....	10-26
10.5.6 Combining Intakes and Doses Across Pathways .....	10-27
10.5.7 Evaluating Uncertainty .....	10-27
10.5.8 Summarizing and Presenting Exposure Assessment Results .....	10-27
10.6 TOXICITY ASSESSMENT .....	10-27
10.6.1 Hazard Identification .....	10-28
10.6.2 Dose-Response Relationships .....	10-30

---

10.7 RISK CHARACTERIZATION .....	10-32
10.7.1 Reviewing Outputs from the Toxicity and Exposure Assessments .....	10-32
10.7.2 Quantifying Risks .....	10-32
10.7.3 Combining Radionuclide and Chemical Cancer Risks .....	10-33
10.7.4 Assessing and Presenting Uncertainties .....	10-33
10.7.5 Summarizing and Presenting the Baseline Risk Characterization Results .....	10-34
10.8 DOCUMENTATION, REVIEW, AND MANAGEMENT TOOLS FOR THE RISK ASSESSOR, REVIEWER, AND MANAGER .....	10-34
 PART B -- REFINEMENT OF PRELIMINARY REMEDIATION GOALS [Reserved]	
 PART C -- RISK EVALUATION OF REMEDIAL ALTERNATIVES [Reserved]	
 APPENDICES	
APPENDIX A ADJUSTMENTS FOR ABSORPTION EFFICIENCY .....	A-1
A.1 ADJUSTMENTS OF TOXICITY VALUE FROM ADMINISTERED TO ABSORBED DOSE .....	A-1
A.2 ADJUSTMENT OF EXPOSURE ESTIMATE TO AN ABSORBED DOSE .....	A-3
A.3 ADJUSTMENT FOR MEDIUM OF EXPOSURE .....	A-3
APPENDIX B INDEX .....	B-1

---

## LIST OF EXHIBITS

<u>Exhibit</u>		<u>Page</u>
1-1	Risk Information Activities in the RI/FS Process .....	1-5
1-2	Part A: Baseline Risk Assessment .....	1-7
2-1	Relationship of Documents Governing Human Health Evaluation .....	2-2
2-2	Role of the Human Health Evaluation in the Superfund Remedial Process .....	2-6
4-1	Elements of a Conceptual Evaluation Model .....	4-6
4-2	Examples of Modeling Parameters for Which Information May Need To Be Obtained During a Site Sampling Investigation .....	4-7
5-1	Data Evaluation .....	5-3
5-2	Example of Output Format for Validated Data .....	5-4
5-3	Examples of the Types of Data Potentially Unsuitable for a Quantitative Risk Assessment .....	5-6
5-4	CLP Laboratory Data Qualifiers and Their Potential Use in Quantitative Risk Assessment .....	5-12
5-5	Validation Data Qualifiers and Their Potential Use in Quantitative Risk Assessment .....	5-14
5-6	Example of Table Format for Presenting Chemicals Sampled in Specific Media .....	5-25
5-7	Example of Table Format for Summarizing Chemicals of Potential Concern in All Media Sampled .....	5-26
6-1	The Exposure Assessment Process .....	6-3
6-2	Illustration of Exposure Pathways .....	6-9
6-3	Common Chemical Release Sources at Sites in the Absence of Remedial Action .....	6-10
6-4	Important Physical/Chemical and Environmental Fate Parameters .....	6-12
6-5	Important Considerations for Determining the Environmental Fate and Transport of the Chemicals of Potential Concern at a Superfund Site .....	6-13
6-6	Flow Chart for Fate and Transport Assessments .....	6-14
6-7	Matrix of Potential Exposure Routes .....	6-18
6-8	Example of Table Format for Summarizing Complete Exposure Pathways at a Site .....	6-20
6-9	Generic Equation for Calculating Chemical Intakes .....	6-21
6-10	Example of Table Format for Summarizing Exposure Concentrations .....	6-33
6-11	Residential Exposure: Ingestion of Chemicals in Drinking Water (and Beverages Made Using Drinking Water) .....	6-35
6-12	Residential Exposure: Ingestion of Chemicals in Surface Water While Swimming .....	6-36
6-13	Residential Exposure: Dermal Contact with Chemicals in Water .....	6-37
6-14	Residential Exposure: Ingestion of Chemicals in Soil .....	6-40
6-15	Residential Exposure: Dermal Contact with Chemicals in Soil .....	6-41
6-16	Residential Exposure: Inhalation of Airborne (Vapor Phase) Chemicals .....	6-44
6-17	Residential Exposure: Food Pathway -- Ingestion of Contaminated Fish and Shellfish .....	6-45
6-18	Residential Exposure: Food Pathway -- Ingestion of Contaminated Fruits and Vegetables .....	6-46

6-19	Residential Exposure: Food Pathway -- Ingestion of Contaminated Meats, Eggs, and Dairy Products . . . . .	6-48
6-20	Example of Table Format for Summarizing Values Used to Estimate Exposure . . . . .	6-49
6-21	Example of Uncertainty Table for Exposure Assessment . . . . .	6-51
6-22	Example of Table Format for Summarizing the Results of the Exposure Assessment -- Current Land Use . . . . .	6-52
7-1	Steps in Toxicity Assessment . . . . .	7-4
7-2	Example of Table Format for Toxicity Values: Potential Noncarcinogenic Effects . . . . .	7-18
7-3	Example of Table Format for Toxicity Values: Potential Carcinogenic Effects . . . . .	7-19
8-1	Steps in Risk Characterization . . . . .	8-3
8-2	Example of Table Format for Cancer Risk Estimates . . . . .	8-7
8-3	Example of Table Format for Chronic Hazard Index Estimates . . . . .	8-8
8-4	Example of Table Format for Subchronic Hazard Index Estimates . . . . .	8-9
8-5	Example of Presentation of Impact of Exposure Assumptions on Cancer Risk Estimate . . . . .	8-21
8-6	Example of Presentation of Impact of Exposure Assumptions on Hazard Index Estimate . . . . .	8-23
8-7	Example of Presentation of Relative Contribution of Individual Chemicals to Exposure Pathway and Total Cancer Risk Estimates . . . . .	8-27
8-8	Example of Presentation of Relative Contribution of Individual Chemicals to Exposure Pathway and Total Hazard Index Estimates . . . . .	8-28
9-1	Suggested Outline for a Baseline Risk Assessment Report . . . . .	9-4
9-2	Reviewer Checklist . . . . .	9-9
9-3	Checklist for Manager Involvement . . . . .	9-15
10-1	Radiological Characteristics of Selected Radionuclides Found at Superfund Sites . . . . .	10-5
10-2	Types of Field Radiation Detection Instruments . . . . .	10-11
10-3	Types of Laboratory Radiation Detection Instruments . . . . .	10-13
10-4	Examples of Lower Limits of Detection (LLD) For Selected Radionuclides Using Standard Analytical Methods . . . . .	10-18
10-5	Summary of EPA's Radiation Risk Factors . . . . .	10-31

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## PREFACE

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) requires that actions selected to remedy hazardous waste sites be protective of human health and the environment. CERCLA also mandates that when a remedial action results in residual contamination at a site, future reviews must be planned and conducted to assure that human health and the environment continue to be protected. As part of its effort to meet these and other CERCLA requirements, EPA has developed a set of manuals, together entitled *Risk Assessment Guidance for Superfund*. The *Human Health Evaluation Manual* (Volume I) provides guidance for developing health risk information at Superfund sites, while the *Environmental Evaluation Manual* (Volume II) provides guidance for environmental assessment at Superfund sites. Guidance in both human health evaluation and environmental assessment is needed so that EPA can fulfill CERCLA's requirement to protect human health and the environment.

The *Risk Assessment Guidance for Superfund* manuals were developed to be used in the remedial investigation/feasibility study (RI/FS) process at Superfund sites, although the analytical framework and specific methods described in the manuals may also be applicable to other assessments of hazardous wastes and hazardous materials. These manuals are companion documents to EPA's *Guidance for Conducting Remedial Investigations and Feasibility Studies Under CERCLA* (October 1988), and users should be familiar with that guidance. The two Superfund risk assessment manuals were developed with extensive input from EPA workgroups comprised of both regional and headquarters staff. These manuals are interim final guidance; final guidance will be issued when the revisions proposed in December 1988 to the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) become final.

Although human health risk assessment and environmental assessment are different processes, they share certain common information needs and generally can use some of the same chemical sampling and environmental setting data for a site. Planning for both assessments should begin during the scoping stage of the RI/FS, and site sampling and other data collection activities to support the two assessments

should be coordinated. An example of this type of coordination is the sampling and analysis of fish or other aquatic organisms; if done properly, data from such sampling can be used in the assessment of human health risks from ingestion and in the assessment of damages to and potential effects on the aquatic ecosystem.

The two manuals in this set target somewhat different audiences. The *Environmental Evaluation Manual* is addressed primarily to remedial project managers (RPMs) and on-scene coordinators (OSCs), who are responsible for ensuring a thorough evaluation of potential environmental effects at sites. The *Environmental Evaluation Manual* is not a detailed "how-to" type of guidance, and it does not provide "cookbook" approaches for evaluation. Instead, it identifies the kinds of help that RPMs/OSCs are likely to need and where they may find that help. The manual also provides an overall framework to be used in considering environmental effects. An environmental evaluation methods compendium published by EPA's Office of Research and Development, *Ecological Assessments of Hazardous Waste Sites: A Field and Laboratory Reference Document* (EPA/600/3-89/013), is an important reference to be used with the manual.

The *Human Health Evaluation Manual* is addressed primarily to the individuals actually conducting health risk assessments for sites, who frequently are contractors to EPA, other federal agencies, states, or potentially responsible parties. It also is targeted to EPA staff, including those responsible for review and oversight of risk assessments (e.g., technical staff in the regions) and those responsible for ensuring adequate evaluation of human health risks (i.e., RPMs). The *Human Health Evaluation Manual* replaces a previous EPA guidance document, *The Superfund Public Health Evaluation Manual* (October 1986), which should no longer be used. The new manual incorporates lessons learned from application of the earlier manual and addresses a number of issues raised since the earlier manual's publication. Issuance of the new manual does not invalidate human health risk assessments completed before (or in progress at) the publication date.

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The *Human Health Evaluation Manual* provides a basic framework for health risk assessment at Superfund sites, as the *Environmental Evaluation Manual* does for environmental assessment. The *Human Health Evaluation Manual* differs, however, by providing more detailed guidance on many of the procedures used to assess health risk. This additional level of detail is possible because of the relatively large body of information, techniques, and guidance available on human health risk assessment and the extensive Superfund program experience conducting such assessments for sites.

Even though the *Human Health Evaluation Manual* is considerably more specific than the *Environmental Evaluation Manual*, it also is not a "cookbook," and proper application of the guidance requires substantial expertise and professional judgment.

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